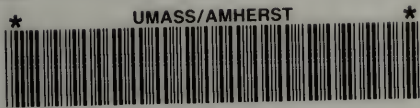


MASS. EA1.2: M382/17

The Massachusetts Watershed Initiative



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Communities Connected by Water

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor

Trudy Cox, Secretary

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
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Massachusetts Executive Office of
Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Room 2000
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What is the Watershed Approach?

Twenty-five years after passage of the federal Clean Water Act, many of Massachusetts' waters are still not fishable or swimmable. Most contamination from point sources such as municipal and industrial wastewater discharges has been brought under control. Nonpoint sources of pollution such as stormwater runoff and septic system failures are now the primary sources of poor water quality. A new approach is needed to improve the quality of Massachusetts' waters, protect fisheries and wildlife habitat, and improve public access. The **watershed approach** meets this need. It is an integrated ecosystem management based on:

- **Geographically defined management.**
The area of management activity is defined by watershed boundaries (drainage area) not political boundaries.
 - **Local people solving local problems.**
Environmental assessment and problem solving are informed by input from the local watershed association, local government, business, and citizens.
 - **Partnership of watershed stakeholders.**
Government agencies and community stakeholders work cooperatively to identify problems, define solutions, and implement action plans.
 - **Guidance by science and public input.**
Sound science guides all phases of watershed management. Public outreach and participation occurs to assist in setting priorities and identifying solutions.
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- **Watershed-based prioritization.** Limited resources are targeted to priority issues in the watershed. Solutions are developed according to watershed-specific needs.



A watershed is the geographic area in which surface water flows to a common point such as a river, lake, or bay. Watersheds form natural boundaries without regard for political lines, such as town or county lines.

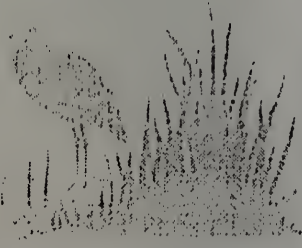
What is the Massachusetts Watershed Initiative?

In 1993, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, in conjunction with citizens, municipalities, businesses, watershed associations, and federal agencies, began a pilot program in the Neponset watershed to test the watershed approach. The success of the pilot program led the steering committee to recommend implementation of the **Massachusetts Watershed Initiative** in all 27 of the state's watersheds. The early and widespread adoption of the watershed approach has made Massachusetts a national leader in water resources management.

Massachusetts has established **basin teams** in each of its 27 watersheds. Basin teams are the focal point for watershed planning and priority setting. They are comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders including watershed associations, municipalities, businesses, regional planning agencies, and

state and federal agencies. The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs has dedicated full-time basin team leaders to coordinate the work of the teams.

Basin teams operate on a **five year cycle** that produces a comprehensive watershed action plan every five years. Every watershed in Massachusetts is currently in some phase of the cycle.

- **Year One: Outreach.** Initial outreach to watershed stakeholders, information gathering, and data needs analysis.
 - **Year Two: Research.** Review of information, filling data gaps, and beginning environmental monitoring.
 - **Year Three: Assessment.** Determination of current conditions and causes and sources of environmental problems; development of solutions to immediate problems.
 - **Year Four: Planning and Implementation.** Production of comprehensive watershed action plan; review of regulatory compliance; planning, and project funding.
 - **Year Five: Evaluation.** Analysis of program effectiveness and preparation for next five year cycle.
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Watershed Initiative Grants

The Massachusetts Watershed Initiative provides grants to nongovernmental organizations to support their watershed protection efforts. **Capacity Building Grants** help strengthen watershed associations so they can fully participate as partners in the Initiative. **Comprehensive Grants** support integrated watershed and growth management planning and are targeted to watershed associations, municipalities and regional planning agencies.

How to Get Involved

- Know your watershed. When citizens know where they live and work within their watersheds, they begin to understand how their actions affect the health of their watersheds. The map on the opposite side shows Massachusetts' 27 watersheds.
- Contact the leader of the basin team active in your watershed to learn how to get involved. Call EOEA at 617-727-9800 x228 to find your basin team leader.
- For information on watershed grants, call John Clarkeson at 617-727-9800 x412.
- Support your local watershed association. Massachusetts has at least one such organization active in each of its 27 watersheds. Contact the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition at 508-534-0379 or mwc@ultranet.com.
- Participate in a citizen monitoring and sampling program such as a "Stream Team" or "Shoreline Survey". Find out more from your basin team or watershed association.

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A watershed is the geographic area in which surface water flows to a common point such as a river, lake, or bay. Massachusetts is composed of 27 major watersheds as shown in the map above.

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